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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE ON RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS

Recent reports of Defense Attachés at this Embassy have indicated an overtly more friendly attitude on the part of their Soviet counterparts. Heretofore this has been manifested principally at official functions. Now, however, it seems to be extending to the informal level, involving invitations to informal gatherings at the private residences of the Soviet Attachés. The private residences themselves are a new departure here.

It has been the policy of the Embassy up to now, when its officers and attachés have received invitations to official functions, to designate one or two officers to attend, providing the function was not one which by wording of invitation or for other reason, the Embassy deemed it appropriate to ignore. Such a policy is obviously not applicable to the informal, personal overtures of Soviet officials.

The Embassy assumes that this observed change is part of the world-wide manifestation of the Soviet's new tactical change of face. The results of that policy, in its manifestation considered here, will be affected by the response and conduct of U.S. officials. Also, the effectiveness of the Soviet policy on officials of friendly nations may be conditioned by the response of U.S. officials, since the latter may be looked to for example. Obviously involved, also, are the propaganda opportunities which might be afforded the Soviet whether U.S. officials respond to their overtures in kind, or rebuff them.

In view of these considerations, the Embassy requests the Department's specific guidance. So far only the Defense Attachés have been object of the Soviet new informal approach.

Ernest V. Siracusa
First Secretary of Embassy

cc: RPA, ARA

State Dept. declassification instructions on file